

Paulina Andrea Valenzuela Lagos
Ph.D. Candidate, Spanish Teacher and Researcher
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EDUCATION

National Taiwan University of Science and Technology – Taipei, Taiwan R.O.C.
Doctor of Philosophy - Ph.D., Digital Learning and Education

September 2023 – at present

Dissertation: *"Assessing Text Readability in Spanish as a Foreign Language: Computational Modelling and Human Judgment."*

1. Study 1 (Computational Modelling): Developing a Hybrid Readability Model for Spanish.
 - Compiled a specialized corpus of CEFR-labelled texts (Graded Readers & DELE passages).
 - Building and comparing linguistic feature-based models vs. Transformer-based models (e.g., BETO, MarIA) to improve automated difficulty classification.
2. Study 2 (Human-Centred Validation): Investigating Learner and Expert Judgments of difficulty.
 - Designing an experimental study to triangulate model predictions against human perceptions from Asian SFL learners (L1 Mandarin).
 - Analyzing the impact of "perceived difficulty," affective variables (anxiety/engagement), and typological distance on reading comprehension.

National Taiwan University of Science and Technology – Taipei, Taiwan R.O.C.
M.A. in Applied Foreign Languages

September 2020 – June 2022

Studied the applicability of reading graded reader picture books and authentic children's books to beginning learners of Spanish, resulting in a 170-page manuscript.

- Designed and executed a quantitative corpus analysis comparing authentic vs. graded Spanish texts, processing lexical data to identify grammatical patterns and frequency distributions.
- Modeled vocabulary ranking systems based on statistical frequency to optimize reading materials for language acquisition (Data-Driven Instruction).
- Synthesized quantitative linguistic data with qualitative user feedback (12-week study) to evaluate the efficacy of the materials.
- Submitted final thesis for acceptance to national and international conferences.

Pontifical Catholic University of Chile – Santiago, Chile
Title of Teacher of Language and Communication
Licentiate in Education (Teaching Certificate)

March 2016 – December 2016

Researched and analyzed the complexity of teaching grammar in High School. Wrote and presented a poster.

- Designed a questionnaire given to six Language (Spanish) Teachers about the national curriculum and grammar.
- Analyzed the questionnaire results describing the factors involved in every case and the situation in general.
- Presented research findings at the Department of Education.

Pontifical Catholic University of Chile – Santiago, Chile
Licentiate in Letters with mention in linguistics and Hispanic literature
Minor in Asian Studies

March 2010 – June 2015

Researched and analyzed the use of articles in Spanish by non-native Spanish learners (A2 - B2), resulting in a 35 pages paper and a formal defense.

- Examined related bibliography and recollected information from four grammar branches: prescriptive, communicative, didactic, and descriptive.
- Selected and designed the corpora, implementing them with two groups of learners (A2 and B2) to analyze four grammatical aspects.
- Submitted final thesis for acceptance to national and international conferences.

ADDITIONAL STUDIES

Pontifical Catholic University of Chile – Online

Diplomado in Professional Python

April 2023 – November 2023

National Taiwan University – Taipei, Taiwan R.O.C.

Chinese Language (6 months) - Chinese Language Division

September 2019 – February 2020

Union College – Schenectady, NY, USA

Pursued courses in Asian Studies

September 2017 – June 2018

Pontifical Catholic University of Chile – Santiago, Chile

Diplomado in Specialization in teaching Spanish as a foreign language

April 2015– October 2015

Seoul National University – Seoul, South Korea

Korean Language (3 months) - Korean Language Education Center

November 2013 – February 2014

ONLINE CERTIFICATES

edX Verified Certificates - Online

- **CS50's Introduction to Computer Science (2023)**
e9ac53ac18274b6fbf452542dbe2483a
- **Text Analytics with Python (2023)**
993e2a47c15541f8a627c7ef2b1abcfa
 - **Text Analytics 1: Introduction to Natural Language Processing**
cd930b15ee174e769b80c4937d165adf
 - **Text Analytics 2: Visualizing Natural Language Processing**
01c1aa76cd784b27b61128a58fa9293a

RELEVANT VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE

Revista Literatura y Linguística – Remote

October 2022 – at present

- Review academic articles for the journal, by critically evaluating research, ensuring methodological soundness, and identifying innovative contributions to the field.

The Ehlers-Danlos Society – Remote

August 2020 – at present

- Proofread medical academic papers translated into Spanish about EDS (Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome).
- Translate documents and events information from English to Spanish.

WORKING EXPERIENCE

National Taiwan University of Science and Technology | Taipei, Taiwan

Teaching Assistant in Applied Foreign Languages

September 2024 – at present

- Provided in-person classroom coverage for the main professor during absences.
- Assisted students with coursework, grading, and administrative support.
- Supported faculty in preparing instructional materials for lectures and workshops.
- Assisted in the implementation and integration of ChatGPT in a Reading and Writing class to enhance student learning outcomes.

Gram (Cram School) | New Taipei City, Taiwan.

English Teacher

February 2023 – at present

- Co-teach English lessons for Taiwanese elementary students from 1st to 6th grade in groups of 10 to 15 kids.
- Read-aloud picture books with different classes, with interactive vocabulary games.
- Assess students' oral proficiency with formal tests.

The Other Way Spanish | Remote

EdTech Project Contributor

September 2024 – September 2025

- Developed an innovative reading club initiative, fostering a community of language learners through structured reading programs.

Lacuna Fund | Remote

Partner Reviewer

September 2024

- Reviewed grant proposals for Natural Language Processing (NLP) projects under the 2024 funding call.
- Assessed proposals for technical feasibility, alignment with funding objectives, and potential impact on the field of AI and education.

Lion and Lion (Cram School) – Taipei City, Taiwan

November 2021 – June 2024

Spanish and English Teacher

- Satisfactorily prepare university students for the DELE B1/B2 exam.
- Design English and Spanish lessons for Taiwanese elementary students from 1st to 6th grade in groups of three to 15 students.
- Coordinate with teachers and TAs term activities, such as spelling bee, debate, and read-aloud.
- Conduct grammar-based classes following the institution's curriculum.
- Prepare successfully each student taking language tests, such as A1 Movers and A2 Flyers, in a one-on-one setting.

Lifelong Learning Center – New Taipei City, Taiwan

March 2023 – June 2023

English Storyteller

- Read-aloud picture books to two groups of 6-10 kids from 3 to 7 years old, with interactive vocabulary games once a week.

Spanish Teacher (Freelance) – Taipei, Taiwan

September 2019 – November 2021

- Taught private lessons adapted to the needs of the students.
- Read aloud books of interest to and with students.

National Taiwan University of Science and Technology – Taipei, Taiwan

August 2021

EMI Teaching Assistant

- Provided online English tutoring classes to 10 first-year college students in preparation for their regular semester as engineer undergraduates.

- Gamified sessions to facilitate students' vocabulary acquisition.
- Won a prize as the best tutor in the program.

MingZhi Junior High School – Taipei, Taiwan R.O.C.

September 2019 – July 2020

English tutor

- Instructed two small groups of 7th and 8th-grade students, respectively, twice a week in elective and immersive classes of English.
- Prepared games and materials to facilitate interaction among the students.
- Discussed topics of interest and cultural matters related to the class and the students.

Saint George College – Santiago, Chile

August 2019

Spanish Teacher

- Taught specific aspects of literature and linguistics in Spanish to Chilean students from 10th grade to 12th grade, following the national curriculum for the subject.
- Designed the classes with my colleague, following the national curriculum.
- Prepared students for a national test.

CEE El Golf – Santiago, Chile

October 2018 – August 2019

Spanish Teacher

- Taught private classes in an intensive program, mainly emphasizing grammar to Japanese students of Spanish learning in the field of mining.
- Coordinated with my colleagues to instruct central and peripheral grammar.
- Designed Lexi-cultural activities in the city of Santiago, instructing the pre and during sessions and preparing the post-session.
- Evaluated the students' linguistic performances and participation.

Pontifical Catholic University of Chile – Santiago, Chile

October – December 2018

Spanish Teacher

- Gave elementary-level Spanish classes to Haitian immigrants under a national project once a week.
- Evaluated students' performances in linguistics skills like speaking, reading, listening, and reading.
- Designed weekly homework and monthly tests.
- Created a Lexi-cultural session in a museum of the Capital City.

Liceo Carmela Carvajal de Prat (High School) – Santiago, Chile

August 2018 – September 2018

Spanish Teacher

- Taught specific aspects of literature and linguistics in Spanish to Chilean students from 7th grade to 10th grade, following the national curriculum for the subject.
- Created and prepared materials and tests for every level.
- Assigned monthly readings according to every level and designed the instrument of evaluation.

Union College – Schenectady, New York, USA

September 2017 - June 2018

Spanish Language Assistant

- Designed and led weekly lab sessions for college students learning Spanish as a second language, promoting students' proficiency in Spanish
- Coordinated with the Spanish language professor to design weekly small group instructional activities to facilitate writing, speaking, reading, and listening with a communicative method.
- Engaged students lead weekly extracurricular activities facilitating language skills.

CEE El Golf – Santiago, Chile

February 2017 – August 2017

Academic Assistant and Spanish Teacher

- Created and designed material to be used in the composition of a book teaching business-level Spanish
- Taught private classes in a regular and intensive program, mainly emphasizing grammar to Japanese students of Spanish learning in the field of mining
- Evaluated the students' linguistic performances and participation

- Collaborated in the design of material for new classes, with a focus on SIELE
- Served as a support staff for SIELE implementation; responsibilities include:
 - Ensure that the necessary technical requirements are met
 - Attend to the public and process the identification of candidates
 - Supervise, control, and administer the exam
 - Solve the technical problems that may arise during the exam
 - Address the needs regarding the spaces of the center
 - Close each session once the candidates have finished

Bridge Language Group – Santiago, Chile

February 2017 – July 2017

Spanish teacher

- Instructed advanced-level private lessons to a Brazilian worker in the field of commerce twice a week
- Designed material according to the topic of discussion
- Evaluated the students' linguistic performances and participation

University of the Andes – Santiago, Chile

July 2017

Spanish Teacher

- Instructed intensive Spanish classes twice per week to American exchange students in Chile
- Evaluated the students' linguistic performances and participation

Middlebury College Chile – Santiago, Chile

May 2015 – July 2017

Spanish Teacher

- Taught American exchange students in Chile, discussing culture and grammar in biweekly private lessons
- Evaluated the students' linguistic performances and participation

Colegio Los Nogales (High School - Internship) – Santiago, Chile

March 2016 – December 2016

- Taught Language and Communication to 11th graders following the national curriculum for the subject.
- Created and prepared materials and tests for the whole level.
- Assigned monthly readings according to the school regulations and designed non-standard evaluation instruments, enhancing students' creativity and problem-solving.

Intercoined Chile – Santiago, Chile

January 2016 – March 2016

Spanish Teacher

- Instructed group lessons to international students in an intensive program for two months
- Determined students' proficiency levels in Spanish through written and oral evaluations
- Instructed private lessons to international students in a reinforcement program, promoting written and oral skills
- Gave weekly one-hour Spanish demonstration classes to recruit students at the institute

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

“The joint effects of storytelling and self-reading of picture books on Spanish beginning learners.” 4th International Conference on Education and Linguistics at Westminster International University in Tashkent. May 6th, 2023.

“The joint effects of storytelling and story reading of picture books on learning Spanish as a foreign language.” 2023 TCCRISLS symposium, Using Stories to Story Instructed, Usage-Based L2 Learning! Center for International Foreign Language Teacher Education, Teachers College, Columbia University, the United States of America. February 3rd, 2023.

“The Applicability of Reading Illustrated Books with Beginning Spanish Learners.” 31st International Symposium on English Teaching & Learning, English for Specific Purposes International Conference & The

21st Academic Forum of National Taipei University of Business. National Taipei University of Business, Taiwan. November 6th, 2022.

“The Applicability of Reading Illustrated Books with Learners of Spanish as a Foreign Language: A Corpus Analysis.” Corpus Approaches to Lexicogrammar (LxGr) Symposium. Edge Hill University, the United Kingdom. July 9th, 2022.

“Problems in the use of articles by Spanish language learners.” 3rd Conference of Young Linguistics. University of Buenos Aires, Argentina. July 6th, 2017.

“Problems in the use of articles by Spanish language learners.” 1st Conference of Spanish as a foreign language. Pontifical Catholic University of Chile, Chile. September 3rd, 2015.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT EXPERIENCE

Research Assistant for the project "Cultural differences in greetings we need to be aware of between Chile and Korea" (2013), responsible for:

- Recollected related bibliography to the topic
- Searched evidence in the media (especially television series from Korea and Chile)
- Analyzed the topic with weekly updates and created a variety of ideas related to the content.

PUBLICATIONS

Valenzuela, P. & Toledo, G. (2019). Uso y adquisición de artículos en español como segunda lengua. *Logos: Revista de Lingüística, Filosofía y Literatura*, 29 (2), 268-285. DOI: 10.15443/RL2922

Valenzuela, P. (2016). Essay: ‘Reciprocidad de la Lengua.’ In *Germinar, florecer, sembrar: jóvenes chilenos mirando a Corea*. Patagonia

SCHOLARSHIPS / GRANTS

- Academic Tutor Grant (2015).
- Teacher’ Vocation Scholarship (2016).
- Union College Language Assistant Scholarship (2017 – 2018).
- Taiwan Huayu Enrichment Scholarship (2019 – 2020).
- Taiwan MOE Scholarship (2020 – 2022).
- Taiwan MOE Scholarship (2023 – 2026).

CONFERENCE ORGANIZATION

“V Graduate Student Symposium,” National Taiwan University of Science and Technology April 2021.

“4th version International Seminar in Korean Studies”, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile. November 2012.

AWARD

Best Tutor/Assistant, 2021. National Taiwan University of Science and Technology
Essays about Korea, 2012. 4th place. Pontifical Catholic University of Chile.

ADDITIONAL SKILLS

Language competencies: Native in Spanish, Fluent in English, Intermediate Level in Mandarin Chinese, and Elementary Proficiency in Korean.

Computer competencies: Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint, and WordPress

Computer language competencies: Proficiency in Python, C(++), and HTML5.

CERTIFICATIONS

TOEFL iBT: Score: 102/120 (Nov 2022)

SIELE: Course of exam preparers (Apr 2017)

AFFILIATIONS

LSA - Linguistic Society of America

ASELE - Asociación para la enseñanza del español como lengua extranjera (Association for teaching Spanish as a foreign language)